REMARKS

The Office Action of December 3, 2001 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed. Claims 27 and 28 are currently pending in the application.

The present invention is directed to an electrical contact and a connector assembly incorporating the contact. More particularly, the present invention is directed to an electrical contact that provides improved "hot swap" capability. In other words, the ability to insert and remove electronic cards into and out of a system while the system is on without negative effects on the system.

Claims 27 and 28 (1 and 2 in the Office Action) stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the examiner has stated that the phrase, "a shortest path between the mating contact and the conductive portion" is ambiguous. Applicants respectfully disagree with this position. The mating contact and the conductive portion are specifically and clearly set forth in the claims. It is quite clear that "a shortest path" is simply a straight line. It is well known that the shortest path between two points is a straight line. As such, the aforementioned phrase is not ambiguous and is clear to one of ordinary skill in the art.

Claims 27 and 28 (1 and 2 in the Office Action) stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,747,783 to Bellamy et al. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

With regard to both claims 27 and 28, the Bellamy reference does not provide each and every element of the claims. Specifically, the Bellamy reference does not allow current to flow along a shortest path between the mating contact and the conductive portion. As illustrated in Figure 1 of the Bellamy reference, the pin 11 (made of conductive material, see col. 3, lines 5 - 6) is separated from an outer layer of resistive material 13 by an insulating layer 15 (see col. 3, lines 9 - 12). Because of the insulating layer 15, current

can not flow directly, i.e., along a shortest path, from the mating contact 19 to the conductive portion 11. The current must first travel along the resistive portion 13 (to the right of the mating contact 19 in Figure 1 of Bellamy) until it reaches the end of the insulating layer 15 before the current is able to reach the conductive portion 11. In other words, the current can not take a shortest path between the mating contact 19 and the conductive portion 11, which would be a straight line directly down from the mating contact 19 (again using Figure 1 of the Bellamy reference for orientation) to the conductive portion 11.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 27 and 28 are patentably distinct from the applied reference. It is respectfully requested that the examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection and issue a notice of allowance at the earliest possible time.

If the examiner is unwilling to withdraw the rejections, Applicants officially request an examiner interview prior to the issuance of any new Office Action. If the examiner has any questions regarding the presently pending claims which could be easily resolved by a telephone conference, the examiner is respectfully requested to contact the Applicants' representative at the below listed number.

Respectfully submitted,

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